

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 4-5 and 7-8 have been amended for clarification. New Claims 9-16 have been added. Support for new Claims 9-16 is found at pages 6-7, paragraphs [0020-0022], paragraph page 9, paragraphs [0030-0031] and pages 11-12, paragraph [0038] in specification. No new matter has been added. Claims 1 and 4 are independent.

The rejection of Claims 1-4 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese Patent 07-330312 by Koyama et al. is traversed.

Koyama discloses reacting lithium hydroxide with hydrogen sulfide in an aprotic organic solvent to obtain a lithium sulfide and washing the obtained lithium hydroxide (See, English translation, paragraph [0038]). However, Koyama does not disclose washing the obtained lithium sulfide with an aprotic organic solvent at 100 °C or higher after said reaction as in Claim 1.

Furthermore, Applicants teach that washing lithium sulfide at a temperature of 100 °C or higher can reduce the content of lithium N-methylaminobutyrate (LMAB) to 0.1 wt% or less in the lithium sulfide (see, Table 1, Examples 1-3 and present Claim 4). Particularly, Applicants show that a sample not washed at a temperature of 100 °C or higher fails to achieve an LMAB content of 0.1 wt% or less (see, Table 1, Comp. Example 2). Koyama does not recognize this criticality of the washing temperature as in Claim 1.

As to Claim 4, the Office asserts that Koyama “[t]eaches in one of the examples, a lithium sulfide purity of no less than 99.8%” (see, Office Action, page 3). However, Koyama does not disclose a lithium sulfide of which a lithium N-methylaminobutyrate (LMAB) content is 0.1 % by weight or less as in Claim 4.

Importantly, in light of teachings of Koyama, one of ordinary skill in the art would not have been led to a lithium sulfide of which a lithium N-methylaminobutyrate (LMAB) content is 0.1 % by weight or less as in Claim 4 because Koyama does not teach washing the

lithium sulfide with an aprotic organic solvent at a temperature of 100°C or higher and the criticality of the washing temperature.

Therefore, Koyama cannot make obvious independent Claims 1 and 4 and the dependent claims thereafter.

Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

The rejection of Claims 5-8 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatenable over Japanese Patent 07-330312 by Koyama et al. in view of US Patent No. 6,022,640 by Takada et al and/or further in view of US Patent Pub No. 2004/0109940 by Kugai et al. is traversed.

The secondary references do not cure the deficiencies of Koyama because none of them disclose a lithium sulfide of which a lithium N-methylaminobutyrate (LMAB) content is 0.1 % by weight or less as in Claim 4. Importantly, none of the references disclose washing the lithium sulfide with an aprotic organic solvent at a temperature of 100°C.

Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

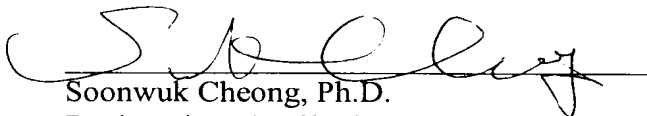
Consequently, in view of the present amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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